

So, then, it seems a real architect can treat more window effectively, if it be *admissible*. Whether it be so or not, in ordinary building, is a question I do not mean to touch, only to observe that "Q. E. D." has not touched it either. His remarks about it are founded on notions peculiar to himself, as, for instance, that part of his house walls are built to keep out light, which I should think could be done far more cheaply than by fourteen-inch walls, and without the inconvenience of keeping it out always in all weathers alike. Again it seems he makes his house to his furniture,—most men their furniture to their house. Lastly, he does not like a side of a room "cut up" into many parts, when in Westminster Palace he will find his own authority "cutting up" every side, inside and out, with no such apparent motive.

But I return to what bears on my argument. When the clever paper to which "Q. E. D." alludes (treating this matter—amount of window void—as a matter of "effect") first appeared, I had thoughts of writing to you on the singular spectacle of your very same number containing another and much cleverer paper, treating the very same question as one of *engineering*, to be settled, that is, "by facts and figures," and Baubage's machine, if it were finished: for here we had two men, representing two crafts, both professing to do the very same thing; to decide the same question, and setting about it in totally different ways, reasoning on irreconcilably different grounds. Could anything be plainer to reason than that one of their ways must be wrong? (whether leading to a right result or not). This has nothing to do with the question, observes, which of these two crafts is wanted, and which not wanted; which I hope hereafter to place before you the means of deciding. The question here is, who took the right way of solving this particular case,—the architect or the engineer? The quantity of window area being a *simple* question, one that you cannot pull into simpler parts, it must be either wholly a taste question, or wholly an engineering one,—either to be settled by physics alone or aesthetics alone,—either by convenience and the laws of bodily health, or by the rules of Palladio, Barry, "Q. E. D." or some other tastemonger. The public will decide for themselves in which court to try it; and as Englishmen are not wont, after once tasting the benefits of common sense and free-trade in light or in anything else, to abandon them for any "architectural effect" (would to Heaven they were as parsimonious of sacrifices to a far worse idol—respectability), the architects may depend on it that—"difficulty" or none—they will have in new arrangements to find a new "effect," or do without any. For my part, I can discover no striking marks of "difficulty" overcome, or "effect" produced, in the present type of house-front, with which I am challenged to compete; but if any particular "effect" (what "Q. E. D." understands by "breadth," for instance) be incompatible with "rationalism" in untaxed fenestration, then that "effect," or that peculiar version of "breadth," is no lawful quality in our architecture. As well complain that a house has not the effect of a pyramid, or a carving not that of a painting. This subtle fallacy is the grand impediment to real art at present; for "respectability" has had its day, and is on the wane; but the "effect" fallacy poisons and perverts everything, from plans down to the minutest details, and seems so bound up in the narrowness of mind common to the majority, that I confess I stand aghast at the rooted growing intensity of the mischief. Good heavens! can nobody see that different things must have different "effects"? What if a preaching church were not to have the peculiar "effects" of a minister? You might as well complain that it is not a basilica—that Shakespeare is not Milton, or that a saw is not a bill-hook.

But to St. Paul's.* I have treated certain matters there, as the engineer treated this window question, on purely utilitarian grounds, and shown them to be, on these grounds, wrongly settled at present, and that there can

be only one physically right settlement of them,—only one that is physically best, or from which every deviation is a loss in utilitarian efficiency. Now, this having been disputed by no one, the question next arises, are solutions thus shown to be right in engineering, right also in "taste"?

Let us suppose one of them right in engineering, but wrong in taste. Who is responsible for the bad taste? Plainly not I, for I settled it without reference to my taste, and (by hypothesis) settled it the best way physically. Well, then, if I only applied certain physical laws, and the result be bad taste, whose is it? It cannot be mine, who (by hypothesis) only applied the laws: it must be His who made them. If the arrangement be strictly deducible from the laws, and be in blameable taste, the laws have made it so, and the responsibility is in whoever made them. Well, then, if the laws have been so made that what they call for and lead to is in wrong taste, who shall tell us what is in right taste? Vitruvius, or Barry, or Q. E. D.? Now, tastemongers, you see your work,—what you have to mend. Who begins?

How happy are we to have tastemongers! Truly we should be thankful, for you see the laws were so made, it seems, as to oblige all who merely followed their experience, all men out of Europe, and all within it, before the fifteenth century, to worship God in temples of bad taste,—all for want of tastemongers. But wait a minute. How is this? These poor men, left to nature and their own devices, invented the Grecian, the Gothic, and all the styles you tastemongers get your rules from! Ah! how is that?

Well, then, for present use, just till they have set the Law-maker right, I will make a shift with these rules instead:—1st. That to prove any arrangement wrong in taste, you must prove it physically wrong, or not so efficient as it might be; and if it be physically right, or as efficient as it can be, it is thereby proved to be in right or blameless taste, except in regard to decoration. Mind, I do not say it is proved to be altogether right, because I hold nothing can be in right taste which is not decorated. But it is not wrong,—it admits of right treatment and the right effect, provided only it be not altered or disguised, but rightly decorated. And here I should remind you that decoration of architecture is a thing wholly extinct among us; no longer to be found even in barns or other rural works out of sight (in which its vestiges lingered latest), far less in palaces and town shams. It has often struck me, when resting on a good, handsome, old five-barred field-gate (they make none such now-a-days)—this gate is more decorated than the Palace of Parliament, or, at least, than any other architectural work of this century. For, to be sure, the Palace of Westminster has a few door-hinges and nail-heads decorated, and the gallery-rails in the two houses, and is thus not so utterly plain as most contemporary structures,—though, compared with any other of like extent, or even with the barns and stables of a century back, it is measurably and abominably void of decoration. What part of this, or of our modern buildings in general, ever has a particle of decoration, i. e. work for grace?—the footings?—the walls?—the windows?—the roofs?—the ceilings? No part; no structure has. Cannot Mr. Bull see that, instead of decorating things, his architects only hide them behind ready-made pieces of decoration,—hide all that their building is composed of behind counterfeit parts of old buildings, because they are ready decorated by some one else. They cannot make their own work fit to be seen, so hide behind screens of other people's work; or, where they cannot hide a thing (as a window), they distort and disguise it into the semblance of something others have decorated! Alas, poor deluded Bull! when will you open your eyes to the true nature and tremendous disgrace and cost of this pretended art?

But, secondly, I think it demonstrates that while whatever is right in engineering may be so decorated as to be right in taste, whatever is wrong in engineering must be wrong in taste, however decorated. That is, if a thing be proved less physically efficient than it might

be, it is, *ipso facto*, proved wrong in taste, and does not admit of improvement by decoration.

And, thirdly, it follows hence, that whatever point, great or little, can be determined by physical efficiency, must, for right taste, be so determined; i. e. it cannot rightly be made matter of taste at all. So that, in right taste, nothing is settled by taste that can be settled anyhow else.

With these blocks, Sir, and a challenge to the architects to shake them, I would lay a bonding-course on what I have proposed for the treatment of St. Paul's, and a foundation for whatever I may add to it. E. L. G.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND NATIONAL GALLERIES.

My cautionary hints as to the interior arrangement of a gallery having been allowed insertion, I proceed to offer a like hint or two with regard to the exterior: and I must do this, as in the former case, by reference to an actual building. I adopt this mode, not to afford indulgence to an ungenerous spirit of criticism, but to show, as before, both what is to be avoided, and what premonitory notice is needed by way of security.

I have already disclaimed all professional bias. I may add that, in the present case, I am not sure that I know even the name of the architect whose work must be my test. Your columns, Sir, are no vehicle for personal depreciation; nor would I inflict a careless or causeless wound on individual susceptibilities. I suppose, however, we shall all agree that every public work is in some sort public property, and that we may speak freely and frankly on what concerns us all alike. I could say much on this topic did space permit. Not only has the public a serious stake in public buildings,—since, whilst an architect bequeaths a lasting ornament, the brick-and-mortar man inflicts a standing nuisance,—but architecture herself and architects are deeply interested in the public discussion of their merits—in the unlocking of the public sense to the perception of artistic beauty—in the education of the public taste, and the practical establishment in the public mind of that one conviction without which we can have, properly speaking, no architecture—the conviction, I mean, that buildings have something beyond mere utilitarian responsibilities. If art is to be patronized, she must be honoured; and if she would be honoured, she must not refuse the ordeal on which all honour is dependent.

The building I am about to speak of is not only a public building, but one as nearly analogous as possible to the one prospectively in view. Nothing, in point of fact, is more remote from improbability, than that defects in a British Museum may be further stereotyped in a National Gallery.

Now the first thing I would notice is the general plan of the grand facade. Here is a national museum rich, perhaps beyond compare, all things considered, in treasures of literature, history, science, and the finest art. It is a sort of sanctuary. One approaches it with solemn feelings. Here are objects that connect themselves and us with ages, some of splendour, some of mystery, to which the mind looks back along a vista crowded with dim images of hoar antiquity. Here is the Magna Charta of our national liberties. Here are venerable copies of the greater charter of the eternal liberties of all mankind. Here are marbles on which once rested the eye of Pericles and Plato. Here are sculptured records carved beneath the mandate of Senacberib and Esarhaddon. Here are things that may have been standing when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt—gods made with hands, once trembled to, now, in all their nothingness, like dismembered Dagon—and men, "fearfully and wonderfully made" by an Almighty finger, in times and places long forgotten, of whom exists no record save in the book that must be opened on "the day for which all other days were made." It is impossible to over estimate the worth and majesty of such a place. So the people of England have begun to feel. So should architecture have learned to say. But here, alas! begins my tale. By what unlucky